Depot Town Rag

Volume 22, Number 4

June 2008

Celebrity stories from those good old days

100% FREE *RAG* CONTENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

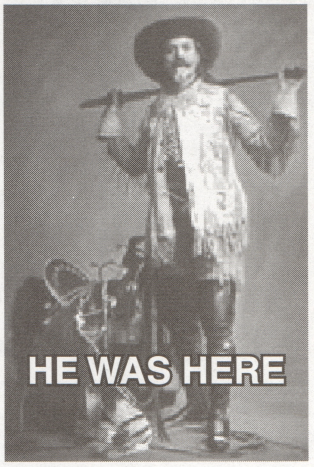
Buffalo Bill stopped here

-James Thomas Mann

William F. Cody—better known as Buffalo Bill—came to Ypsilanti with his Wild West Show on July 28. 1900. The train pulled in to the MCRR depot at Ypsilanti and the cars unloaded. When all was ready, the show marched down Congress Street, now Michigan Avenue. The parade route was lined by thousands as it passed. The parade included Cowboys and Indians of the American West, Mexican Vaqueros, South American Gauchos, Russian Cossacks, and more. The parade turned onto the city Fair Grounds—now Recreation Park—and settled in for the day. There were two performances; one at two in the afternoon and a second at 9:30 p.m. Admission was 50 cents, half price for children under nine, and reserved seats were $1.

"The show is perfectly clean and marked by vigorous action from start to finish," noted *The Ypsilantian* of Thursday, 2 August 1900. "The beautiful horses and the wonderful horsemanship, especially that shown by the Cossacks, the remarkable marksmanship of Miss Oakley, Johnny Baker and Col. Cody, the hideously painted Indians with their weird cries and dances, the maneuvers of the handsome Irish, German and American troops, the Cubans and Filipinos, the brilliant artillery drill, the Arab tumbling, and many other features were heartily applauded."

The main attraction of the show, however, was the illustration of the charge on San Juan Hill from the Spanish-American War. "Real Rough Riders who served with Col. Roosevelt will take part in this exhibition, in addition to Cuban warriors and scouts," *The Ypsilantian* of July 19, 1900, had reported in a promotion for the show. Although the real battle occurred over twelve hours, the management "have selected the most desperate movements and enough is given to give the auditor an idea of the eventful affair," claimed the promotion.



Far left: The masterful showman understood promotional hyperbole with this advance poster for his tour

Left: Col. W.F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, about the time he performed at Ypsilanti, Michigan in July of 1900

The entire cast of the Wild West Show took in the reenactment of the battle which included twelve hundred men and horses.

"The battle of San Juan Hill gave a very good idea of a battle although in miniature, and the fact that the men who take part in the mimic battle were with Col. Roosevelt in the real one, gives the audience a thrill that is genuine," reported *The Ypsilantian* after the show.

The bivouac scene was said to have rekindled the memories of those who had been in the Civil and Spanish American Wars. Some who had been out in the "Wild West" said the scenes were accurate in their recollection of the west.

"The principal feature of the show is that everything and everyone in it is just what is claimed," concluded *The Ypsilantian*.

When the last show was over, the cast and company packed up, marched back to the Depot, boarded the train and went on the next stop on the tour.

Follett House legend is still not verified

After world tours with his famed Wild West Show, Cody needed money and finished his career with smaller stage performances that consisted mostly of storytelling with two comrades: "Wild Bill" and "Texas Jack." Depot Town street lore has told of this program produced in the ballroom of the Follett House but, so far, the only well-documented appearances are of his train unloading here for two separate performances of his show in public outdoor fairgrounds in Ypsilanti.

"Wild Bill" Hickok, "Texas Jack" and "Buffalo Bill"

The Irma, "Buffalo Bill's Hotel in the Rockies," Cody, Wyoming, 1908, looked much like Depot Town's townscape at the time

A Follett House ballroom window

Historic Depot Town continues the tradition of great popular attractions in the parks and in the streets of Ypsilanti:

Another great American entertainer arrives

Kavan Hilliard *Chris Solano* *Irv Jones* *Quentin Flagg* *Robert Washington* *Matt Joyce* *Ted Torres*

In Riverside Park

The world-renowned Michigan Elvisfest began in 2000 in Ypsilanti, Michigan's Historic Depot Town. Beautiful Riverside Park is the place where Elvis fans flock by the thousands every July to pay homage to the King of Rock & Roll and to hear the most award-winning professional Elvis Tribute Artists in North America, as well as other talented Legend Tribute Artists.

Best and largest Tribute Concert in North America!

Shake, Rattle and Roll with the Best Professional Award-Winning Elvis Tribute Artists paying homage to the King of Rock 'n Roll.

FANTASTIC LEGEND IMPERSONATORS

Talented artists pay tribute to rock and roll legends you know and love.

BIG FLAT SCREEN TV RAFFLE

Other great prizes. All proceeds go to Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels.

DOOR PRIZES

Elvis memorabilia and other great prizes. All proceeds go to Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels.

ELVIS MEMORABILIA

Festival T-Shirts, Polo Shirts, Bowling Shirts, Hats, Visors and many more collectible Elvis items.

COLD BEER, DRINKS, FOOD

Friday, July 11
Special Event
MEET THE ARTISTS

Meet and greet the Artists for autographs, photo-ops and conversation at the Holiday Inn, Plymouth Rd, Ann Arbor.

...and many more talented Tribute Artists

The Change of Habit Tribute Band
Chicago's newest Elvis Tribute Sensation

Saturday, July 12
Special Events

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

To commemorate the 31st anniversary of the King's death, a candlelight vigil will be held on Saturday night. A limited number of candles will be available, so bring your own small candles, pen lights or lighters for this solemn occasion.

GOSPEL HOUR

Enjoy Elvis' favorite Grammy-winning gospel songs from 2 to 3 p.m. Your spirits will be lifted, guaranteed.

CHILDRENS' FUN AREA

Children's Elvis costume contest winners will be presented with beautiful trophies.

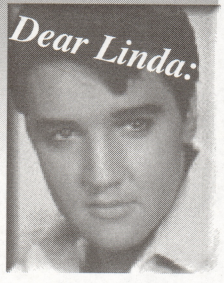
AMERICA'S MOST WANTED CAR CLUB

Over 100 classic cars on display from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

DRESS UP AND ENJOY THE FUN!

In the spirit of this unique event, have some fun and dress as Elvis or wear your favorite poodle skirt.

Heartbreak Airport
When "the real Elvis" came to Ypsilanti



Linda Brashears remembers when Elvis's arrival in Ypsilanti was announced for his 1957 concert in Detroit. Her dad thought Elvis's music was "not real music" and would not take her out to Willow Run Airport to see him land there.

She was just a little girl then but she persevered. When she entered eighth grade at Ypsilanti High in the fall of 1959, a school assignment was to write an essay about "some famous person." Brashears, of course, wrote about Presley.

She sent a copy of that essay to Presley at his newly acquired Graceland mansion in Memphis, Tennessee. That December, she received a Christmas card from Presley––with Elvis and Colonel Tom Parker pictured on the front cover.

Was she thrilled? Nope. "I was disappointed," says Brashears. "I just wanted a picture of Elvis, alone."

World of Rocks®
Crystals, Minerals, Fossils and Beads
Custom Beadwork • Handwrapped Specialties • Findings • Classes
734-481-9981
www.worldofrocks.com
I-94, Exit 183
42 N. Huron
Just south of Depot Town

On the Web: www.mielvisfest.org

August 16 marks the 31st anniversary of Elvis's death, when thousands of fans will visit his birthplace in Tupelo. Mississippi.

Thank you, Mr. Presley

The great success of the Depot Town Association's annual ElvisFest was the impetus for the district's new Community Development Corporation (CDC), providing the largest amount of seed money for the installation of twenty-four new street lights in Riverside Park this past winter.

"Nonprofit" does not have to become a way of life. Monies can be kept for neighborhood improvements and many more will follow this dynamic start.

Just think: Elvis would be 73 this year!

If Elvis had lived longer, he possibly would have re-written, "Are You Lonesome Tonight?" Here's how it might have turned out (Senior Citizen Version):

Are you lonesome tonight?
Does your tummy feel tight?
Did you bring your Mylanta and Tums?
Does your memory stray,
To that bright sunny day,
When you had all your teeth
and your gums?
Is your hairline receding?
Your eyes growing dim?
Hysterectomy for her,
And it's prostate for him.
Does your back give you pain?
Do your knees predict rain?
Tell me dear, are you lonesome tonight?
Is your blood pressure up?
Good cholesterol down?
Are you eating your low fat cuisine?
All that oat bran and fruit,
Metamucil to boot.
Helps you run like a well oiled machine.
If it's football or baseball,
He sure knows the score.
So your gallbladder's gone,
When you're hungry, he's not,
When you're cold, he is hot,
Then you start that old thermostat war.
When you turn out the light,
He goes left, you go right,
Then you get his great symphonic snore.
He was once so romantic,
So witty and smart;
How did he turn out to be such
A cranky old fart?
So don't take any bets,
It's as good as it gets,
Tell me dear, are you lonesome tonight?

The Top 9 Signs you're being stalked by an Elvis tribute artist this month

9. All of the dark messages on your voice mail feature the Jordanaires crooning in the background.

8. To prove his love, he offers to buy you a 1977 Oldsmobile Delta 88.

7. Stalking "gigs" arranged in advance by someone identifying himself only as "The Colonel."

6. Security camera shows the guy only from the waist up.

5. Out of the corner of your eye, you catch a glimpse of him kicking the crap out of a Michael Jackson impersonator.

4. Well, "something" has been rummaging through your garbage cans – and you're pretty sure that bears don't wear white polyester and sequins.

3. You're working late at the office. Alone. Suddenly, the phone rings. It's him. He just wanted to let you know he hasn't yet left the building.

2. Walking down the street, you don't "see" anyone following you... but every time you turn around real fast you catch a whiff of Elvis, the cologne.

. . . and the number one sign you're being stalked by an Elvis tribute artist...

1. You try to scalp Michigan ElvisFest tickets to him and he doesn't need any; he's on the program on the Riverside Park stage in July.

THE HAIR STATION
Where Your High Expectations Are Met!
• Trend-Setting Styling
• Premier Hair Coloring
• Pedicures
48 East Cross 734-485-8228

Kimberly RICE
DDS, PLC
FAMILY DENTISTRY
529 N. Hewitt Road
734-434-3820

ice cream • penny candy • old fashioned toys & home goods • popcorn
GORDON'S G FIVE & DIME
Katherine Gordon
Shannon Gordon
owners
Toys & Treats for Kids and Kids-at-Heart
23 E. Cross Street
734.482.1830
Fax 734.482.1831

Baked-on Automotive Finishes • Complete Collision Repair
CITY BODY EST. 1930
20 E. Cross St. • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
734.482.4737 • 482.9353 • FAX: 482-0181
SCOTT SOBBRY BRUCE SOBBRY

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
WEDNESDAYS
3p.m.-7p.m. thru October 29
SATURDAYS
8a.m.- 2 p.m. thru October 25

Candace B. Pinaud
734.476.3366
www.LeaveNoStone.com
Candace@LeaveNoStone.com

LEAVE NO STONE MORTGAGE LENDING
22 E. Cross St, Depot Town • Ypsilanti 48198

Freighthouse receives $35K preservation grant

A $35,000 grant from the Department of the Interior and administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was awarded to the City of Ypsilanti. The Ypsilanti Freighthouse is the designated beneficiary of the funds. Grant proceeds will be matched at 40% with additional funds from The Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse, the Depot Town DDA and the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation.

"This grant targets some of the most critical site issues surrounding the Freighthouse," stresses FOYF co-chair Nathalie Edmunds, "water run-off and accumulation, which is undermining the foundation and producing what is called 'rising damp' in the brick walls and mortar."

Repairs will involve the installation of proper drainage systems, collection of rain water run-off into the drains, and the contouring of the surfaces around the entire site, including nearby parking areas. "We were very confident, because we did our homework and prepared our application with great care," says Edmunds.

New kids on this old block

New shingle hangs here

Stuart Collis moved his law offices here from the Key Bank building in February. A 1995 graduate of Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Collis also attended UM Law School from 1987-1991. Collis is also a soccer coach in South Lyon where he and his wife and baby daughter live.

Collis joins a noble tradition of attorneys in this block. Francis Ninde (see eponymous street between Enchanted Florist and Spa Burjon) was an early mayor of the city and one of our first attorneys. Local legend says the first attorney in town nearly starved to death—until the second one arrived—and they both got rich.

At this location close to the Cross Street Bridge, clients can find the following expert legal services: family law (divorce/custody), criminal defense, traffic law (tickets, OWI), collections, estate planning and wills, contract law, and business law.

Law offices of Stuart M. Collis, P.C.
8 East Cross Street
481.8911

Frog Island
creative services

Offers marketing services for small businesses

"Professional marketing and design isn't just for large corporations," say partners Tonua Brown and Paul Stacy at Frog Island Creative Services. "Our company brings the same quality services used by Fortune 500 companies to your small business. We understand the fast pace and limited resources of small businesses and can help your organization look better, speak clearer and seem bigger."

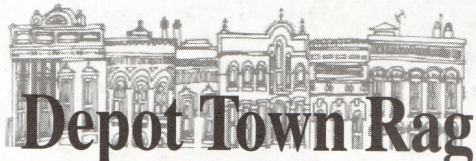
Before opening at 6 E. Cross (directly across from the south entrance to Frog Island Park), Frog Island Creative was a "virtual" office, operating via the Internet since 2004.

As stated so professionally on their Web site, this unique business service offers: website design and online marketing, marketing and sales materials, messaging and branding, business presentations, writing (marketing and technical), trade show signs and graphics, and business video production.

Frog Island Creative Services
6 E. Cross Street
734.330.2511
info@frogislandcreative.com
www.frogislandcreative.com

In the next *Rag*:

More bars in more *interesting* places; that's what this block is all about. If you lined up all our bars end to end, how far would they reach?



Depot Town Rag

"All the news that fits, we print"
A monthly publication of
the Depot Town Association, Inc.
The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
To the editor:
thomasdodd@comcast.net

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Gary McKeever, President
Merrill Guerra, Vice President
Carole Clare, Treasurer
Sandee French, Scy. & Past President
Website: www.depottown.org

NEW MEETING PLACE:

DTA meets at 6:30 p.m on the third Wednesday of each month at **RealKidz, Inc., 35 East Cross** (next to Aubree's).

Cookies and coffee, lot of neighborhood activity; come join the action.

"Special thanks to Tracy Briggs, co-founder of the Michigan ElvisFest, for her many years of work, her creativity, and her great friendship." -ElvisFesters

Dr. Arvin O'Dell
CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN
324 Miles Street 734- 485-2120
We deal with vertebral subluxation in the spine causing nerve interference affecting one's health.
We adjust to restore nerve flow to the body
Bring this ad for $20 off 1st visit and $15 off every visit in next month
Get Well with O'Dell

Ad Art
concepts ♦ designs ♦ screenprinting ♦ ad specialties
Diane C. Brown
236 Kirkley Dr., Brooklyn, MI · (517)592-8708
· e-mail: dianebrownadart@aol.com · FAX: (517) 592-3585

SILVER & GOLD COINS
Old Towne Coin & Gold
Certified Member ANA/JA/PNG/MRA/N.F.I.B.
In historic Depot Town for 25 years
24 E. Cross Street 734.483.6155
FAX: 734.485.8300

the QUEEN OF HEARTS
Pastries & Bakery, Inc.
9am-7pm
Tuesday thru Saturday
Closed
Sunday & Monday
(734) 487-9223
32 E. Cross St.
www.queenofheartspastries.com

HARRINGTON'S
STANDARD PRINTING
In historic Depot Town
John & Pattie Harrington
120 East Cross Street 734.483.0339
Ypsilanti, MI 48198 Fax 734.483.3130
email: info@ypsistandard.com

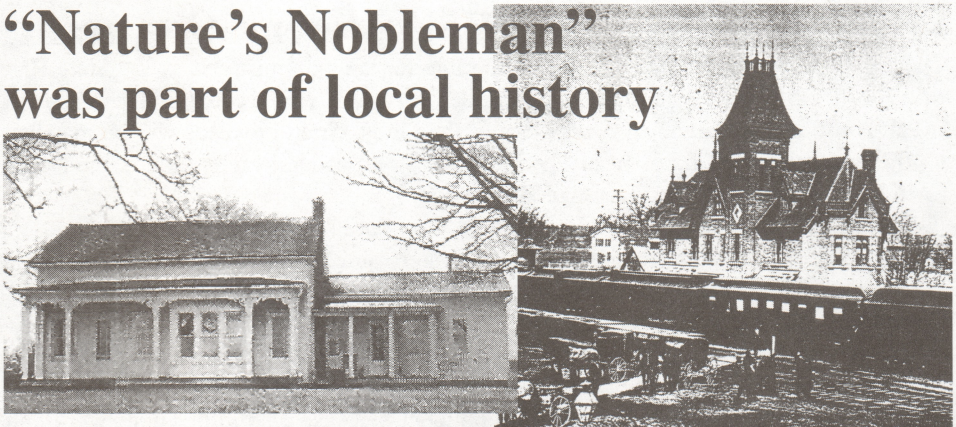
W.F. Cody brought America's Wild West to the whole world

-Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming

In 1883, Cody created what would become Buffalo Bill's Wild West, a vehicle that propelled him to fortune and worldwide fame. The Wild West would run—in one form or another—for thirty years, charming crowds throughout the United States and Europe. In Europe, Cody was called "Nature's Nobleman" because he was someone who had grown up on the frontier yet represented all of those best aspects of civilization.

Despite his characterization as a figure from the past, Buffalo Bill always looked to the future. As a businessman, he invested in projects that he hoped might bring economic growth to the West. With his earnings he invested in an Arizona mine, hotels in Sheridan and Cody, Wyoming, stock breeding, ranching, coal and oil development, film making, town building, tourism, and publishing. In 1899, he established his own newspaper, the *Cody Enterprise*, which is still the main source of information for the town of Cody today. Taking advantage of his celebrity status, Cody was an early advocate of women's suffrage and the just treatment of American Indians.

"Nature's Nobleman" was part of local history



-Pittsfield Township Historical Society

The Cody farmhouse at 670 Textile Road, just west of State Street. David and Maria (Hurd) Cody lived here with their two children, William Norgate and Mary. Family members tell of cousin William Frederick Cody coming to visit when his Wild West Show appeared at Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, and the Washtenaw County Fairgrounds more than 100 years ago.

Cody's private rail cars unloaded where this train sits at the MCRR depot in Ypsilanti

Cody & 'Charlie'

Cody cousins' house to be moved and preserved by Pittsfield Township

Bill Cody rode his horse on at least one occasion from his private train stopped in Depot Town to his cousins' farmhouse in nearby Pittsfield Township. Today, township officials are taking steps to remove the Greek Revival Cody farmhouse from 670 W. Textile Road near State Street to a new location. The current owner of the former Cody farm plans to demolish the several barns, and has met with Township officials to discuss saving the historic house. The cost of moving the house is estimated at $62,000.

Just across from the Cody farm is the Sutherland-Wilson farmstead, another historic site, already preserved by Pittsfield Township and the Township's Historical Society.

It's celebrity season and those who haven't seen an Elvis yet are looking around for proof that the greatest show biz celeb of the *20th century* was in Depot Town during *his* career.

Elvis *who*?

See pages 3, 4, & 5

When Buffalo Bill came to Depot Town:

- 28 July 1900, Recreation Park, Ypsilanti
- 12 July 1910, Reinhart Show Grounds, Ypsilanti

For a complete report, see George Ridenour's research in the Spring 2008 edition of *GLEANINGS*, a publication of the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

Above: W. F. Cody, ca. 1886
Right: Arta, William F., Louisa & Orra Cody, ca. 1880.
Bottom: Buffalo Bill with Sitting Bull, 1885

Ypsilanti Historical Society
Museum and Archives
(free admission)

Hours: 2:00 to 5:00pm
Tuesday thru Sunday

220 North Huron Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org
Museum: 734-482-4990 *Archives: 734-217-8236*

Ypsi Images
at the
Nelson Amos Studio
Original Paintings, Prints, Calendars, Cards & Coasters
9 E. Cross Street
734.484.2787
www.nelsonamosstudio.com

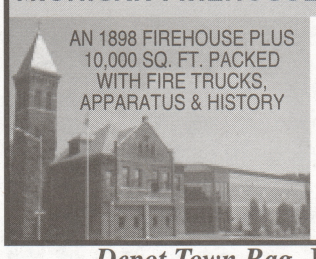
Visit us at the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum

Hours:
Mon-Fri
1:30-5pm
Sat 10am-5pm
Sun. noon-5pm

www.ypsiautoheritage.org
Admission
Adults $3
Children under 12
accompanied by an adult free

(734) 482-5200
100 E. Cross Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

MICHIGAN FIREHOUSE MUSEUM



AN 1898 FIREHOUSE PLUS 10,000 SQ. FT. PACKED WITH FIRE TRUCKS, APPARATUS & HISTORY

110. W. CROSS
734.547.0663
Tues–Sat 10 to 4
Sunday 12 to 4
Closed Monday
Adults $3.00
FF/Sr/Stu $2.00
6–15 $1.50
Under 6 Free

What would Elvis eat?

See the *Presley Family Cookbook* written by Vester Presley, Elvis' uncle and a guard at Graceland, along with Nancy Rooks, a Graceland maid, for some of Elvis' favorite foods, including"

- Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwich
- Ham Bone Dumplings
- Baked Apple & Sweet Potato Pudding

Start your search for Elvis's favorites at any of the fine establishments featured below. Elvis would have liked it down in Ypsilanti's old railroad district....

SIDETRACK Bar and Grill
56 E. Cross Street 734.483.1035
rated by GQ Magazine - Top best Burger in the country
Reserve FRENCHIE'S for your next meeting
Our kitchen is open until 2 a.m.!

CAFE LUWAK
Ice Cream
Deli Sandwiches
Coffee Drinks
42 E. Cross Street
734-482-8050
FAX: 734-482-FOOD
Info@cafeluwak.com
www.cafeluwak.com
- Deli Sandwiches on Fresh Baked Bread
- Homemade Soups and Sides
- Espresso & Coffee Drinks
- Stroh's Premium Ice Cream

Call or visit our web site for information on our catering services

CORNER BREWERY
Café • TV Lounge • Beergarden
Beer • Wine • Sandwiches • Snacks
720 Norris - Forest between Huron & River
480-BREW • cornerbrewery.com

Aubree's DEPOT TOWN
- Best Pizza in Town
- Daily Happy Hour Specials
- Projection TV's w/Soundog
- The Game is Always on!

39 E. Cross Street • 483-1873

Cady's GRILL & BAR
Announcing our new partner & chef Jerry Carpenter
new menu ▪ superb collection of wines
36 E. Cross Street ▪ 483-2800

RAGTIME Coming events

1 June
ORPHAN CAR SHOW
Riverside Park

3 June - 20 September
Tuesday nights
MOTORCYCLE MANIA

4 June & 9 July
7 p.m. Wednesdays
FROG ISLAND MUSIC SERIES
FREE - WCC Jazz Band, Ypsilanti Community Band & Symphony and more.... Different bands every week: jazz, orchestra, top 40, and smooth jazz ensembles

5 June
EAT GOOD AND HELP SAVE OUR FREIGHTHOUSE!
Frenchie's (next to Sidetrack)
Help support fundraising efforts to restore Ypsilanti's Historic Freighthouse

5 June - 18 September
Thursday nights
DEPOT TOWN CRUISE NIGHTS

This photograph of Jenny Lind, taken by Mathew Brady in 1852, both enhanced her celebrity and encouraged the nascent practice of portrait photography. Brady's tradition continued in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town.

It's a tradition here

Tasteful entertainments have been a regular staple of Ypsilanti's Depot Town since before it became historic. Jenny Lind, "the Swedish Nightingale," sang and the Swedish Bell Ringers performed there.

Many of the nation's most renowned jazz musicians performed in the Freighthouse for several years in the WEMU/DTA Jazz Series. Native New Orleans exclaimed that Ypsi's Freighthouse was "bigger and had better acoustics than Preservation Hall!"

Thousands of performing artists have graced Heritage Festival stages these past 30 years—some of them local, all of them entertaining.

ElvisFest started a whole new "tradition" of performers who looked and sounded like other performers. Who knew such a unique departure would lead the community into saving its City parks and other programs through a Community Development Corporation?

Mathew Brady's tradition of portrait photography was exploited here by Camp Photo, the nation's most renowned school photographer above today's Frenchie's and Photo Street (that's not an alley!) commemorates that historic business.

Your community owned natural foods grocery in Depot Town at 312 N. River
Ypsilanti Food Co-op
Food as close to nature as possible to provide healthy and delicious options, including fresh baked sourdough breads and sweets from our wood fired brick oven.
734-483-1520
Open daily from 10 am to 9 p.m., Saturdays 9 am to 9 p.m.

ENCHANTED FLORIST, inc.
46 E. Cross St. • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
(734) 547-9230
"Service with a personal touch."
Specializing in all of your personal & corporate needs
$5 off an in-store purchase of $19.95 or more
free local delivery on arrangements of $29.95 and up (a value of $7.95)
Only one offer can be used at a time. Not valid with any other offer or in-store specials.